DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 154 620 FL 009 465

AUTHOR	Davidson, David M.
TITLE	Current Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar in ESL. Language in Education: Theory and Practice, No. 5.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Arlington, Va.
PUB DATE	May 78
NOTE	27p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Center for Applied Linguistics, 1611 N. Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209 ($2.95)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Audiolingual Methods; Audiovisual Aids; *Communicative Competence (Languages); *English (Second Language); Error Analysis (Language); *Grammar; Instructional Innovation; *Language Instruction; Language Skills; Listening Comprehension; Pattern Drills (Language); Second Language Learning; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*Cognitive Approach; Community Language Learning; Information Analysis Products; Rapid Acquisition; Silent Way; Suggestopedia; Total Physical Approach; X Word Grammar

ABSTRACT

This article explains, with specific examples, some of the newer audiolingual and cognitive approaches to the teaching of English as a second language (ESL). It is suggested that several of these methods can be integrated into an eclectic approach. Situational Reinforcement and the Audiovisual-Structural-Global Method are among the audiolingual methods discussed, as are various types of drills and real-life situations. A number of cognitive approaches to ESL instruction are described: the Silent Way (Gattegno), Community Language Learning (Curran), Suggestopedia (Lozanov), Rapid Acquisition (Winitz and Reeds), Total Physical Response (Asher), X-Word Grammar (Allen), Sentence Combining, Basic Composition, and Error Analysis. One major point of agreement revealed in this survey is the necessity of providing opportunities for students to think about the language, in order to be able to extend their learning to new language situations. There is also a widespread use of real situations and everyday language in the classroom. The use of visual stimuli is recommended, not only to delineate words and actions, but also to trigger responses showing that the students understand what they are saying. It is also recommended that more attention be given to improving listening comprehension and to the affective aspects of learning. The common goal is to facilitate real communication in English. (CFM)

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LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

5

Current Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar in ESL

David M. Davidson

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Published by
Center for Applied Linguistics

Prepared by
ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics

ISBN: 87281-081-X

May 1978
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By the Center for Applied Linguistics
1611 North Kent Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Printed in the U.S.A.

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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CURRENT APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR IN ESL

The teaching of English as a second language has been in a state of flux for several years, primarily because the audiolingual method of language teaching has undergone a critical reevaluation fostered by the advocates of a more "cognitive" approach. In many educational centers there has been a clear and conscious movement away from the traditional techniques of mimicry and choral response toward an approach that stresses functional control over the rules of grammar through formulation and/or demonstration.

Even those teachers still adhering to the audiolingual method have recognized the need to make drills more communicative and "real" and have been developing techniques to do so. Many persons involved in the more cognitive procedures have not entirely abandoned audiolingual techniques, but have focused most of their attention on one or more of a number of approaches that have gained currency in ESL teaching in the past five to ten years. These methods differ widely in many respects: some involve a gradual, structured approach to the acquisition of grammar, while others permit or encourage students to learn and use the language in "chunks" or as needed in normal communication; some encourage students to begin speaking immediately, while others attempt to develop listening comprehension before anything is said; some leave the development of graphic skills to a later point in the course, while others require students to read and write immediately; and some use the students' native language, while others shun it. Basic to all of these methods, however, is the belief that students can best learn a language not by merely repeating and memorizing, but by working out, understanding, and ultimately internalizing the "rules" of that language and using them to communicate in an original and creative manner.

This article will endeavor to explain, with specific examples, some of the newer audiolingual and cognitive approaches and techniques and to suggest how some of these procedures can be integrated into

an eclectic approach to the teaching of English as a second language.[1]

Audiolingual Practices

Many teachers still functioning in the audiolingual mode have become increasingly influenced by the cognitive theorists and are attempting to foster reasoning and rule acquisition among their students. This has taken the form of drills that encourage more natural communication and extended, connected discourse within particular contexts; the encouragement of greater student autonomy in handling the language, even in the early learning stages; extensive use of visual aids to stimulate utterances; the early introduction of reading and writing; and even formal presentation of grammatical structures.

A practitioner of the audiolingual method, Paulston (1971) distinguishes among mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills. In mechanical drills such as repetition or substitution, the teacher has complete control over the response, and students do not have to know the meaning of what they are saying. In a meaningful drill, there is still instructor control of response, although the answer may be expressed in different ways, but the students must understand what they are doing: they must recognize the grammatical features in order to manipulate them properly. In a communicative drill, there is a free transfer of learned language to appropriate situations in which the speaker adds new, factual information. Paulston maintains that all three types of drills are necessary but suggests that more emphasis be placed on the meaningful and communicative drills.

In one type of meaningful drill she describes (for construction of information questions), the instructor cues the students with answers:

Instructor: John's outside.
Student 1: Where's John?
Student 2: John's outside.

Instructor: He's playing ball.
Student 1: What's he doing?
Student 2: He's playing ball.

Instructor: In time for dinner.
Student 1: When's he coming home?
Student 2: In time for dinner.

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[1]For other surveys of current teaching methodologies being used with ESL students or applicable to such use, see Newton (1974) and Madsen (1976).

Student 1 is involved in meaningful language instruction with certain options, but his question must be appropriate to the cue. Student 2, of course, is merely involved in a mechanical repetition drill, but he does give a formal completion to the dialogue.

Toward Communicative Ability

Rivers (1972, 1973) is concerned with the "great leap" from pattern practice to communicative ability and offers a number of suggestions to help students move from "pseudo-communication" to interaction and autonomy. She outlines the movement that must take place from mechanical drills, such as simple substitution, to meaningful drills, which require structural and semantic understanding, to true communicative drills--where there is no control of the response, and the students have a free choice in answering. (The responses are limited only by the control built into the stimuli and by the students' own opinions.)

One problem Rivers finds with many drills is that they force students to utter totally untrue, unreal, or unnatural statements. She suggests creating situations which are relevant to students' lives and then forcing them to think about the meaning and consequences of what they say in such situations.

For example, in setting up a drill for *I would tell* _____ *to* _____, the instructor might say to a student: "If you were doing your homework and your younger sister started talking, what would you tell her to do?" The student might respond: "I would tell her to stop talking." Or, the instructor might ask: "If you wanted to watch a television program and your parents were playing a record, what would you tell them to do?" If the student responded: "I would tell them to stop playing the record," the instructor would challenge the answer as an inappropriate way to speak to one's parents.

An alternative pattern might be suggested by either the instructor or the student, such as: "I would ask them if they would please . . . ."

Similarly, in the controlled "pseudo-communicating" drills such unreal utterances as "Are John and I at the circus?" should be avoided. Rather, each exercise should be given a situational context and a lexical content that are readily transferable to real interchanges. After a brief presentation of grammatical forms through teacher-directed practice, the instructor should set up a simulated activity that forces students to produce independent responses that are the same type as those in an artificial teacher-directed exercise.

For example, students can practice questions in groups or pairs by

making polite inquiries of each other, asking for specific information about a matter for which they have some vocabulary, interviewing someone, or making telephone inquiries about goods, services, or schedules. Or, the instructor can give one student vague instructions to transmit to his/her partner and then allow the second student to request clarification from the first student, who, in turn, questions the instructor. The second student then carries out the instructions and reports back to the instructor.

Indirect speech can be practiced by having the instructor whisper information to one student, who must then pass it on: "The instructor said she saw an interesting film last night. She said the film was about an unknown boxer. She said the boxer got a chance to fight for the championship." And so on.

Depending on their abilities, students should be given the opportunity to function in realistic conversational situations such as giving directions, apologizing, expressing reactions to a visual presentation, talking their way out of trouble, problem solving with one or more classmates, and entertaining in front of the class (e.g., simulating a radio call-in show, telling a joke, performing a comedy routine or skit, doing commercials). Errors should not be corrected during this kind of interaction, but the repeated ones should be noted and discussed later. According to Rivers, it is by encouraging an "adventurous spirit" in students from the earliest stages of language learning that we can help them move toward communicative competency.

Real-Life Situations

Von Elek and Oskarssen (1972) describe an audiolingual program that stresses real-life situations and that demands students' active attention through pictorial aids and workbooks that serve as stimuli for choral responses. One or two teacher-selected structures are incorporated into a dialogue of about fifteen exchanges that center around a particular situation, such as buying a car. Students are later asked to do written exercises based on the dialogues, primarily transformation drills. In this procedure, students listen to the dialogue read by a native speaker of English; listen again while following the text in a workbook; repeat (chorally) italicized words and expressions after hearing them read in context; repeat the entire dialogue in sections; and, finally, take one role in the dialogue while the instructor takes the other.

The following is an adaptation of this method. It focuses on adverbs of manner and prenominal adjectives, and it incorporates pictorial stimuli:

Buying a Car

Salesman: Good morning, sir. Are you looking for *a new car*?

Customer: Actually, I am looking for a good used car--one that *runs well*.

Salesman: We have a number of late model cars *that are priced to sell quickly*.

Customer: There are so many *good-looking choices*. Can you recommend one?

Salesman: What type of car would you like?

Customer: A four-door sedan with *power steering and brakes* and *an AM/FM radio*.

Salesman: I have *several low-mileage cars* that fit the description. How do you like this one? (Show picture of a two-door sedan.)

Customer: No, that's *a* _____ *sedan*. I want *a four-door model*.

Salesman: Oh, that's right. Well here's *a shiny red demonstrator model*. *It runs quietly*.

Customer: It certainly *sounds quiet*. But do you have *a smaller, imported one*?

Salesman: Here's one that was only driven to and from church on Sunday by *a little old French lady*. And she *drove very slowly*.

Customer: Not bad, but perhaps I should get *an American car* after all.

Salesman: Here's *a four-door, air-conditioned Chevrolet* with *whitewall tires*. (Show car with one door off its hinges.)

Customer: I can't take that car. It's been in an accident. It has *a broken* _____.

Salesman: I can see you're *a tough customer*. Well, I have only a few more to show you. They're *selling fast*.

Contextual Concerns

William R. Slager (1973) stresses the importance of context in the

development of language drills. He feels that the instructor should strive to resolve the usual conflict between grammar and context and to create realistic situations to which all of the sentences are related. He gives a number of suggestions for contextualization: the situation should be relevant and immediately useful to the student; content should reflect the students' level of sophistication and knowledge of the world; the language should be natural and true; the sentences should be relatively short and easy to say; the language mode should be appropriate for the structure; different social levels of conversation should be reflected in dialogues; and alternative answers should be provided in drills so that they can be used in normal communication.

In giving examples, Slager discusses the present perfect tense. The major contextual concerns for this structure relate to its meaning and use--particularly in contrast to the past tense--and appropriate format. The present perfect signals "current relevance," i.e., it links an earlier event or state with the current situation, and drills should illustrate this link. Since the present perfect tense is used naturally in speech and often in shortened responses, he suggests dialogues as a suitable format.

The following dialogue is based on Slager's suggestions.

1. Beginning with *been* and using time expressions *ever* and *never*:

   José: I'm going to Europe this summer. Have you ever been there?
   Marie: No, I haven't. Have you?
   José: No, I've never been there, but my brother has. In fact, he was in Spain last year.

2. Introducing *already* and *yet*:

   Susan: Have you seen "Rocky" yet?
   John: No, I haven't. I hear it's a great film.

   Susan: Well, let's see it tonight. Would you like to come, Marie?
   Marie: No thanks. I've already seen it.

   Susan: How about you, José?
   José: I saw it last night.

3. Introducing *since* and *for*:

   Instructor: How long have you been in the United States?
   Student: Since 1976.

   Instructor: You speak English very well.

Student: Thank you. I studied it in my country before I came here.

Instructor: How long have you been studying English altogether?
Student: For six years.

The above dialogues can be entirely controlled, or they can be changed to "meaningful" drills by permitting free alternate responses and role changing.

According to Slager, the key to preparing successful drills is to design contexts that are appropriate for teaching particular constructions, and at the same time to make the context interesting, meaningful, and useful. In order to accomplish this, the instructor must be aware of how language is actually used.

Situational Reinforcement

Among "communication-oriented" language programs is Situational Reinforcement, a method in which beginning students listen and repeat, engage in a controlled teacher-student dialogue, and then in student-student dialogues. What marks such drills as "communicative" (although Rivers and Paulston would probably label them "meaningful") is the use of meaningful, relevant dialogues without a rigid ordering of grammatical points, and the gradual building toward conversation practice.

An early drill might look like this:

Instructor (to student): Go to the water fountain.

Instructor: Where are you going?
Student: I'm going to the water fountain.

Instructor: What did you do?
Student: I went to the water fountain.

The value of such a drill lies in the facts that the student responses are appropriate to a specific situation and may be used outside the classroom, the question-answer format approximates real communication, and the contrast of past and present progressive is a natural one.

A series of question-and-answer drills triggered by visual stimuli can be strung together into connected discourse. For example:

Instructor: What are these?
Student: They're aspirin tablets.

Instructor: When do you take aspirin?
Student: When I (you) have a headache.
or: When I (you) have a fever.

Instructor: Where do you buy aspirin?
Student: In a drugstore/supermarket.

Instructor: What do you ask for?
Student: You ask for aspirin/a bottle of aspirin.

In the above series of brief exchanges, we have relevant, useful content and the provision for alternative answers. Information takes precedence over grammar, and the drills build toward conversation practice triggered by the questions. (For further examples, see Hall, 1967.)

Audiovisual-Structural-Global Method

The Audiovisual-Structural-Global Method reported by John Schumann (1972) seeks to develop concepts through carefully structured dialogues illustrated with filmstrips. For example:

Paul is working in his room. (Illustrated by a picture of a boy sitting at a desk, reading.)

Instructor: Where is Paul?
Student: In his room.

Instructor: Yes, but where in his room?
Student: At his desk.

Instructor: Are there any toys in his room?
Student: No (there aren't).

Instructor: Are there any toys on his desk?
Student: No.

Instructor: What is Paul looking at?
Student: (He's looking at) a book.

Instructor: What is he doing? Paul is working in his room.
Student (repeats): Paul is working in his room.

This question-and-answer procedure helps the student to understand the meaning of the target sentence by examining the details of the picture and responding appropriately. Students should be permitted to respond in their own words and should only be helped if they don't have the vocabulary or structure to describe what they see. The final repetition underscores the point of the illustration.

Follow-up grammar drills, again using a question-and-answer pattern related to a picture, force the student to learn the grammar of the sentence by communicating.

(Subject) Instructor: Who is that?
Student: (That's) Paul.

(Complement) Instructor: What's this?
Student: (This is/It's) a room.

(Object of preposition)
Instructor: Where is Paul?
Student: (He's) in his room/at his desk.

(Possessive) Instructor: Whose room is it?
Student: (It's) Paul's/his (room).

(Verb) Instructor: What's he doing?
Student: (He's) working.

This is not mere practice in asking and answering questions, because students must answer in a way that shows they understand the use of the grammatical structures involved.

Anticipating Student Responses

By attempting to predict forms students will use, William E. Rutherford (1973) offers a resolution to the apparent conflict between the student's desire to use language to communicate and the teacher's need to draw attention to certain structures. In what he calls "presupposition drills," Rutherford asks questions in which the presupposition is false, e.g., "What countries border on Spain besides Germany and Belgium?" He predicts that knowledgeable students, or those who have a map in front of them, will respond with, "Germany doesn't border on Spain, and neither does Belgium." Part of an extended dialogue using this technique might look like this:

Instructor: Should I go to Madrid by boat or by plane?
Student: The plane goes to Madrid, but the boat doesn't.

Instructor: Should I learn French or Italian before I go to Spain?
Student: They don't speak French or Italian in Spain.

Instructor: Should I rent a Volkswagen or a Fiat, or should I get a foreign car?
Student: A Volkswagen and a Fiat are foreign cars.

Students, of course, need training in the grammatical constructions involved before participating in this type of exercise.

Other constructions that are amenable to the "presupposition" method are cleft sentences and comparatives:

Instructor: It was a good idea of Nixon's to start the Peace Corps, don't you think?

Student: It wasn't Nixon who started the Peace Corps; it was Kennedy.

Instructor: What country besides India is bigger than the Soviet Union?

Student: But India isn't bigger than the Soviet Union.

Cognitive Approaches

Because many instructors still employing predominantly audiolingual methods have adopted modifications that promote cognition, and because many teachers following a cognitive mode still use such audiolingual techniques as modeling, drills, and pattern practice, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make sharp distinctions between the two. In general, however, we might say that the latter, *from the very outset* of language instruction, seeks to force students to think about the language and understand its possibilities in order to make extended use of it beyond the specific vocabulary and situations introduced in the class room.

Much of the excitement in ESL teaching these days, in fact, is the result of new cognitive approaches to or "schools" of language instruction, each with its philosophical leader and devoted disciples.

The Silent Way

Gaining extensive ESL visibility early in this decade, Caleb Gattegno's Silent Way (1972), with its emphasis on teacher silence and the preeminence of learning over teaching, seemed a sharp contrast to the audiolingual method. The Silent Way involves the use of a few basic visual tools--Cuisiniere rods (small wooden sticks of varying length and color), color-coded letter charts for pronunciation, basic word charts, and situational drawings. The technique in essence consists of the instructor's modeling new vocabulary *only once*, and from then on eliciting utterances with gestures such as nods, counting off words of an utterance on the

fingers, motioning to go ahead or stop, and a variety of conductorial gyrations performed with a telescoping pointer--all reminiscent of the old "Charades" pantomime game. Students learn quickly that they must listen carefully to the instructor and to each other and that they must try to answer their own questions.

An early lesson might proceed as follows: Six or seven rods of different colors and sizes are placed on the desk. The teacher points to one, says, "rod," and motions for the students to repeat. He then points to a second rod, again says, "rod," and again motions for the students to repeat. He points to a third, and without saying anything, motions for one or all of the students to speak. The students by now realize that regardless of size or color, the sticks are called "rods."

The instructor then picks up one rod and says, "a yellow rod," and motions for repetition. He picks up another one and says, "blue." Some students in the group will respond with "a blue rod" and so on down the list of colors--pink, white, green, red, and black. For orange, the teacher might try to elicit "an" rather than "a" with an "adding-on" motion of the fingers. If students do not volunteer the word, the instructor will have to say it, but will leave it for the students to figure out for themselves why they must use "an" in this situation.

Within a surprisingly short time the instructor can move on to numbers and the plural ending, demonstrate "give" and "take," introduce "and" and the pronouns "one," "ones," "me," "him," "her," and "them," and have students directing each other, for example, to "take two black rods, three pink ones, and one red one and give them to her." Statements about size and position are also easy to demonstrate and elicit with the rods. Some instructors introduce reading and writing very rapidly by putting scrambled words on the board and asking students to write "good sentences" or by asking students to point to words on a chart in grammatical order. Students can quickly take over and direct portions of the lesson themselves. Use of the rods for teaching structure, including all of the tenses, sentence parts such as clauses and phrases, and even punctuation is limited only by the instructor's ingenuity.

While there are superficial similarities to the audiolingual method, e.g., objects are often used to trigger responses, the Silent Way does not call for mere repetition and mimicry; from the outset it forces students to make analogies--to do some very active brain work in order to come up with appropriate utterances.

Community Language Learning

In Community Language Learning, developed by Charles A. Curran (1976), the instructor is seen as a language counselor who restates

and clarifies students' utterances, helping them to express what they want to say at a particular moment. For absolute beginners, the counselor's role is that of translator from the native to the target language, but in most ESL situations in which the technique is being used, students are able to ask each other certain basic questions in English, even if imperfectly.

In an ESL class based on the CLL model, a group of from five to ten students sit around a tape recorder and have a conversation. The instructor is primarily a resource person if help is needed to express something. After about twenty minutes, the conversation is stopped and the tape is played back, one utterance at a time. As the students listen to themselves, they are given the opportunity to make corrections on their own (without altering the tape). The instructor later listens to the tape and notes any frequent errors. At the next session, students are asked to listen to their tape again and to write a "correct" transcript together, with the teacher again being a resource person and helping only when asked. After reading over the transcripts, the instructor can decide which grammatical structures the students need to work on. Since every conversation involves questioning, some of the earlier lessons will necessarily focus on construction of yes-no and information questions and on indirect questioning.

As a follow-up, using only the students' sentences, the instructor might ask them to change all statements into questions or to produce the question that elicited a particular response. A "concentration" game is also used in which students are asked to match a question word on one card with the balance of the question on another card. For example:

When	your brother older or younger?
Where	you going back to Peru when you finish school?
How	you like this school?
What	did you come to the U.S.?
Whom	are you from?
Do	do you live with?
Are	is your best subject?
Is	old are you?

One of the values of this technique is the highly motivational effect of having students work on the aspects of the language they want to know in order to carry on real communication with their classmates. But the instructor by no means abandons control of the structures to be studied, because in any twenty-minute conversation among a group of low- to intermediate-level students, most of the basic grammatical elements of tense and word order will be evident and imperfectly used. The other major benefit of this technique, when employed by a skilled counselor, is the development of a "language community" among the students working together which provides support and encouragement for the risk taking necessary to learn to use the language properly.

Suggestopedia

Developing risk-taking ability or a "childlike spontaneity" among language students is also one of the goals of Suggestopedia, a methodology of foreign language teaching developed by Dr. Georgi Lozanov at the Institute of Suggestology in Sofia, Bulgaria. As reported by W. Jane Bancroft (1975), students at the Institute are given a pseudonym and "biography" appropriate to the target language and culture, and are encouraged to role-play, free from inhibition. Groups of twelve students are provided with a pleasant, protected atmosphere, including soft lighting and reclining armchairs. Their instructor is trained in psychology, acting, and yoga.

Language learning is a combination of memorization of word groups and corresponding grammatical rules along with immediate practical application through realistic dialogues and review. This may take the form of sketches or plays about actual situations, improvisational endings to dialogues, story telling, recitation, singing, or field trips during which students have to function in the target language. The emphasis is on listening and speaking, with the first five days of a 24-day course devoted entirely to oral work. The "Suggestopedic Cycle," repeated in each daily four-hour session, begins with a review of previously learned material through conversation between teacher and student, and between students, in the target language. New material is then presented with necessary grammar explanations and translation. This is followed by a one-hour "séance" or relaxation session during which the new material is reinforced as students listen to the repetition of phrases in various intonations, look at corresponding words and pictures, and listen to the dialogues acted out by the instructor over a background of baroque music. During part of the séance, students lean back and breathe deeply and rhythmically, using yoga relaxation techniques, which are intended to heighten concentration.

Students are often put into real-life situations, such as acting as "tourist guides"--positions which many, in fact, are training for--ordering a meal, or renting a room. Much emphasis is placed on appropriate gestures and facial expressions to enhance communication.

As in Community Language Learning, a strong bond develops among the group members, who support each other's learning. Other interesting elements of the system are the use of phonetic transcription of new vocabulary; the early introduction of all tenses; a continuity of plot, events, and activities throughout the course; the regular monitoring of students' health during the course; and encouragement of "sleep learning" with tapes.

It is claimed that Suggestopedia speeds up the assimilation of the basic elements of a foreign language (e.g., students learn 80 to

100 words per class session) and eliminates the usual stress accompanying an intensive course.

Rapid Acquisition

An approach developed by Harris Winitz and James Reeds (1973), called Rapid Acquisition of a Foreign Language by Avoidance of Speaking, is based on what the authors call "a functional property of the human brain"--that there is a natural sequence of development in language learning. They therefore stress listening comprehension and discourage speaking, permitting students to give only nonverbal responses until a high degree of comprehension has been achieved.

As essential elements in their program, they limit utterances to an average of eight words--the most that students can be expected to remember--and rely heavily on problem solving as the most effective approach to learning rules. Their carefully graded program limits the complexity of sentences to base structures and the vocabulary to 3,000 content words, as well as all function words.

The following is a typical "problem-solving" exercise (this one for understanding pronouns): Students are shown four pictures (a man, a boy, a dog, and a girl, all with some food). They are then given a verbal stimulus such as "she" or "her food" or "hers" and asked to select the one correct picture that corresponds to the word. After seeing several groups of pictures where the correct choice may be a female, a male, or a neuter, the student--through association, elimination, or some other problem-solving process--will have a clear concept of the meaning and will be able to produce the word appropriately at some future point in the program.

Total Physical Response

James Asher (1969, 1974) also stresses listening comprehension in his "Total Physical Response" program, because he believes that in a time-limited language course the instructor should concentrate on the skill that has the largest positive transference to the other language skills. His research has also indicated that when students learn speaking and listening together, listening comprehension is greatly delayed.

Asher has students listen to a command and then carry it out. Initially the instructor will model the physical response, and then the student will act alone upon command. A variant of this is to have students listen and watch as a model performs the commands and then, after an intervening period, have the students act themselves. Asher claims to have students doing rather complicated tasks within a short time, such as "Walk to the door, pick up the pencil, put it on the table, and sit on the chair." An interesting claim for this method by those who teach adults is

that older students outperform children in language retention, quite the contrary to language acquisition in other methods.

Patricia L. McEldowney (1975) provides a further rationale for the teaching of imperatives early in a language program. Imperatives serve as the basis for the "language of instruction" and therefore have immediate educational relevance. Also, as one of the finite verb forms, they account for a sizable amount of all verb usage.

McEldowney suggests concentrating on the three verb patterns--verb alone (*Stop/Go/Sit down*), verb-object (*Take a book/Pick up the paper*) and verb-object-object (*Give him the pencil/Get me a piece of chalk*). She also suggests the early introduction of adverbials, as in "Go *to the board*," "Listen *carefully*," and "Hand in your work *so I can check it*." She also recommends that the students carry out the tasks, but permits them to give the commands to each other and also has them respond to written directions. By successfully carrying out directions, learners quickly recognize the need and usefulness of this form.

X-Word Grammar

Along with the recognition that learning a second language must involve a conscious thought process has come the search for a system of grammar that clearly explains the structure of English and that students can employ to create their own utterances. Robert L. Allen's Sector Analysis or X-Word Grammar has proved to be a very workable system for many ESL instructors and students.

Sector analysis describes the sentence as made up of a sequence of positions or sectors that can be filled by words or groups of words in a variety of forms. Most sentences, for example, contain positions for subject, verb, complements, etc., which are filled by such units as phrases and clauses. The function of the unit within the sentence is determined primarily by the position it fills, with grammatical meaning coming from a combination of form and function. Its basic difference from other grammars is that it is construction- rather than word-oriented and is particularly suitable as a grammar of written English. As an illustration, consider the following:

> *The month of January* is very cold.
> *The month of January*, we usually go to Florida.

In the first sentence the italicized phrase fills the subject position, while the identical words in the second sentence serve an adverbial function. (See Allen, 1972.)

An initial series of lessons focuses on the x-words, which give the system its popular name. X-words are those which are used to initiate yes-no questions. Students are asked to write twenty such questions, each beginning with a different word. They are then requested to group the x-words which "seem to go together." They should ultimately produce the following groups:

am	do	has	can	will	shall	may
is	does	have	could	would	should	might
are	did	had				must
was						
were						

Students are then given a series of sentences and asked to identify the x-word in each one, including sentences that have "hidden" x-words. (*Do*, *does*, and *did* are said to be hidden in non-x-word verbs in affirmative statements.)

Students are next asked to turn statements into yes-no questions, which involves shifting the x-word to the front of the sentence (and in some cases revealing the hidden x-word). They must also identify the subject of the x-word.

One of the advantages of this system is that it has self-editing techniques built in. Students, for example, can check for "complete" sentences by trying to turn each one into a yes-no question. If they cannot, they know something is missing, and they are advised to either attach the group of words to a true sentence (one that checks out) or to add one or more words so that it will be a true sentence by itself.

The early stages of the x-word system are useful in developing the ability in beginning level students to form spoken questions and negative statements. It also provides the basis for a beginning writing program. The system can be carried forward to more advanced writing, with students learning to identify the various sentence components and the more complex verb forms and developing sophisticated self-editing techniques. (For a useful student text, see Kunz, 1976.)

Sentence Combining

Sentence combining is another system that has been employed successfully by ESL instructors to help students understand and produce English structures. Based on transformational-generative grammar, sentence combining operates on the premise that all our sentences are generated from "deep structures" through a process which is intuitive for native speakers of a language. "Kernel sentences"--basic subject-verb constructions--are such

structures, and two or more of them can be combined through use of certain procedures or transformations to produce more sophisticated utterances or writing in normal communication. For example, the sentences (1) We saw a film, and (2) The film was made by Woody Allen,[1] may be transformed into

(a) We saw a Woody Allen film, or
(b) We saw a film by Woody Allen, or
(c) We saw a film made by Woody Allen, or
(d) We saw a film which/that was made by Woody Allen.

In sentence (a) we have combined sentences (1) and (2) by taking the proper noun from sentence (2) and placing it in the prenominal position where it can serve an adjectival function. In sentence (b) we deleted all of sentence (2) except the prepositional phrase which we added to sentence (1). In sentence (c) we deleted the noun phrase and auxiliary, leaving a participial phrase to be attached to sentence (1). And in the last sentence we substituted a relative pronoun to produce a relative clause. Each sentence may have a different shade of meaning, and the choice may depend on context, emphasis, or personal style.

Sentence combining can be used throughout an ESL writing program. It is also an effective technique for simple oral production of conjoined and coordinated sentences.

For conjoining subjects:

(1) Juan was studying English. (2) Maria was studying English.
Juan and Maria were studying English.

For conjoining verbs:

(1) They were reading all night. (2) They were writing all night.
They were reading and writing all night.

For conjoining objects:

(1) Maria got an "A." (2) Juan got a "D."
Maria got an "A" and Juan a "D."

For coordinating sentences:

(1) Maria went to a movie. (2) Juan went to the library to study.
Maria went to a movie and/but Juan went to the library to study.

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[1]This sentence has already undergone a "passive voice transformation" from the kernel, *Woody Allen made the film.*

For coordinating sentences with one negative:

(1) Maria had a good time. (2) Juan didn't have a good time.
Maria had a good time, but Juan didn't.

For conjoining sentences with two negatives:

(1) Juan didn't get home early. (2) Maria didn't get home early.
Neither Juan nor Maria got home early.

For conjoining sentences with *(either) . . . or*:

(1) We are going to Puerto Rico. (2) We are going to the Dominican Republic. (Choose one.)
We are going to (either) Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic.

(For a variety of simple sentence combining exercises, see Rand, 1969.)

A useful transformation that can be introduced to somewhat more advanced students involves the prenominal adjective. It results from one of several possible transformational processes such as:

1. The deletion of a related independent clause, or sentence, with a predicate adjective.

   (a) The rug was stolen. (b) The rug was *Persian*.
   The *Persian* rug was stolen.

2. The reduction of certain adjectival prepositional phrases.

   (a) They rented a boat. (b) The boat was *for fishing*.
   They rented a *fishing* boat.

3. The reduction of certain noun phrases.

   (a) The doctor looked at the leg. (b) The leg had an *infection*.
   The doctor looked at the *infected* leg.

Among the grammatical considerations involved in studying this transformation are the prenominal positioning of the adjective, the proper sequencing of two or more adjectives, and the use of correct adjectival and possessive forms.

When teaching the structure, the instructor must first establish the point that in English, adjectives (or "one-word describers") commonly appear before the noun (or "word that they describe"). Students can be helped to arrive at this awareness and to formulate

a "rule" about English grammar through several methods. The instructor can present them with a number of sentences containing one prenominal descriptive adjective, ask them to identify the "descriptive word" and "word being described," elicit the terms "noun" and "adjective," and help the students come to a conclusion about the relative positioning of the two. The instructor can also offer them several pairs of sentences to be combined by a shift of the adjective to prenominal position and then ask them to formulate the rule. For a means of contrast, students can be asked to write similar sentences in their native language and then to point out the differences in word order. All of this is calculated to make the prenominal adjective positioning a conscious act for the students.

At this point, students can be offered sentence-combining exercises fashioned after the transformations illustrated above. (For excellent student workbooks, see Frank, 1972. The best book available for using sentence combining in extended discourse is Strong, 1973. It is most suitable for advanced ESL students. It must be used with caution, however, because it was designed for native speakers, and the idioms will offer ESL students many difficulties.)

Basic Composition

Another approach to the teaching of composition skills to lower-level students involves a highly controlled and carefully sequenced procedure that makes use of cloze passages, the answering of questions, and the construction of questions for given responses. The student begins by supplying all forms of the verb *be* in a simple descriptive paragraph and then responds in writing to questions based on that paragraph. In the next step, the student is asked to write an autobiographical composition based on responses to questions. The composition can be written using only *be* in the present tense. For example:

> What is your name?
> Where are you from?
> What is your native language?

In a further step, students are asked to complete a dialogue by writing appropriate questions to answers that have already been supplied by the instructor. The process is then repeated using *be* in the past tense as well as other verbs in the present and past. (For a more detailed discussion of this technique, see Taylor, 1976.)

Error Analysis

Since most ESL students enter programs with some knowledge of

English, diagnosis is an essential tool in determining which structures to teach and in what sequence. A relatively new approach to diagnosis involves identifying and analyzing errors in order to determine which grammatical errors cause communicative difficulties. A useful study in this area has been done by Burt and Kiparsky (1972), who identified two categories of error: (1) global errors, which usually involve overall sentence structure and significantly hinder communication; and (2) local errors, which affect single elements in a sentence. Among the major categories of global errors are incorrect word order; missing, incorrect, or misplaced sentence connectors; and overlooked exceptions to general syntactic rules. Local errors involve such matters as noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries, and quantifiers.

One category of global error that merits special attention is the "psychological predicate," which tells how a person feels about something or someone. Normally the "experiencer" comes before the stimulus, as in *She likes ice cream sodas.* But there are a number of verbs which operate in reverse order, putting the stimulus first, as in *That woman interests him.* Students attempting to use such verbs without realizing their exceptional character can produce such misleading sentences as *He interests that woman.* Following is a list of some of these verbs:

thrill	surprise	frighten	disappoint
charm	fascinate	scare	worry
excite	satisfy	shock	bother
impress	offend	confuse	delight
please	insult	bore	relieve

Another type of global error involves misuse of certain complements, i.e., *that*-clauses, infinitives, and gerunds. When the subject of the infinitive or gerund is also the subject of the main clause, it is omitted, as in *We want to go to Miami next week.* When the gerund or infinitive has a different subject, it has to be added, as in *We want him to go to Miami next week.* The student who does not recognize these exceptions, or who substitutes an infinitive for a *that*-clause, as in *He thinks to be in trouble*, is communicating improperly.

Selective correction of global errors can be an effective, time-saving way to facilitate communication. More advanced structures, such as subordinate clauses, should be introduced early in the teaching program, while "local" errors should be tolerated until they are eventually overcome. It is also suggested that the instructor work to develop student facility in word order, use of sentence connectors, and other crucial areas of syntax.

Which to Use?

The foregoing only touches the surface of an ocean of new ideas--and adaptations of not-so-new ideas--that are having some impact

on the way ESL is currently being taught. While the proponents of particular methodologies and techniques will understandably make broad claims in support of their work, experienced ESL instructors will recognize that there are no easy solutions for the great variety of problems that they face--individually in the classroom and collectively within the discipline. Recognizing that students have different learning styles, that no one model is ideal for all conditions, and that we ourselves have particular styles and sensitivities, we must pick and choose and experiment, and ultimately adapt methodologies to our own situations.

This survey suggests, however, that there are certain commonalities of approach and a few sharply contrasting views that are worth examining in the light of our own instructional settings. One major point of agreement is that we cannot rely on mindless tasks to help students to communicate. We must provide opportunities for them to think about the language in order to be able to extend their learning to new language situations. Some suggest that the best way to do this is to rely on the students' resources--both their knowledge of the target language and their ability to reason. Problem-solving exercises appear to be a good way to stimulate thinking and are an integral part of sentence combining as well as of the approaches championed by Rutherford, Winitz and Reeds, and Gattegno.

There is also a widespread use of real situations and everyday language in the classroom. Rivers is most instructive in this area, even suggesting that we hold students responsible for social as well as grammatical acceptability. To control structure while operating within reality, Rutherford and Rivers recommend structuring questions to anticipate responses; others such as Paulston and von Elek recommend drills within connected discourse--a procedure that will be more natural than standard drills.

The use of visual stimuli is also recommended, not only to delineate words and actions, but also to trigger responses that guarantee that students understand what they are saying. Acting out instructions, which forms the basis of the techniques of Asher and others, also offers the same guarantee.

We should also give careful consideration to an area that may ultimately prove to be more important than any other: the affective aspects of learning. Emphasized by Curran and recognized by many others, it is well described by Rivers as the fostering of an "adventurous spirit"--the willingness to take risks in using a new language.

Whether or not we are in a position to accept weeks, if not months, of total silence while our students develop listening comprehension, as Winitz and Reeds recommend, this primary aspect of language learning certainly merits more attention than it ordinarily

receives. And those instructors who feel that grammatical structures should be gradually and sequentially introduced might consider the "real-life" value of having students operate, when appropriate, with several structures at once. Ultimately, of course, it is up to individual instructors, who know their own situations best, to seek and select those techniques with which they and their students will be most comfortable. It is most important, however, that whichever techniques they employ, they are facilitating real communication in English.

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